

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, ranking members Miner and France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Richard Boritz and I live in Southbury. I am submitting testimony to support funding gun violence prevention programs included in the Governor's budget for the Department of Public Health. Ever since the shooting in Sandy Hook Elementary when I lived near the school, I have supported the efforts of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. This year, they are proposing solutions to prevent violence before it starts.

You can help do this by creating an Office of Community Gun Violence Prevention and by funding the work of other violence prevention programs such as Project Longevity and Compass Peacebuilders.

Killings in Connecticut due to guns have doubled since the pandemic began. While police solve crimes afterward, they can't be in all places at all times to prevent the escalation of a conflict. That is where these other agencies come in. I hope you will heed the advice most of us have heard during doctor visits, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

I am no expert on this issue so I am speaking to you out of conviction born of being a witness to what gun violence did to people in my community of Sandy Hook. The entire community suffered trauma. Unfortunately, children in our cities are routinely exposed to gun violence and will suffer lifelong negative consequences to their physical and mental health because of this. With your vote to fund an Office of Community Gun Violence Prevention and other violence prevention programs, you have an opportunity to actually prevent this from happening as often as it does.

Thank you for listening.

Richard Boritz  
Southbury